

March 15, 2013

Testimony for HB #6519 - An Act Concerning The Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food

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My name is Elena Sapozhnikov. I am a loving mother of three young children (ages 11, 9 and 4). I am also a wife of a GI Doctor in New London County, who I feel has credibility when it comes to answering my questions as to what food to buy for our children. My greatest concern is the health of my family and avoiding Genetically Engineered foods, particularly processed products.

As a doctor, my husband sees a great deal of patients with severe gastrointestinal disorders, Inflammatory Bowel Disease like Crohns Disease and Gastro esophageal Reflux. We have many conversations about whether there is a direct correlation to Genetically Engineered foods and GI symptoms. As a father and mother we feel strongly that we don't want our children to have food that has been genetically altered in any way, shape or form. (Refer to Exhibit A and B)

As a mother of three young children, I always buy cheese that doesn't contain rennet. One of the brands I purchase is CABOT. Their label specifies that it doesn't contain animal rennet. It's my responsibility to take proper care of my husband and my children to decrease the exposure of potentially dangerous GM foods. (Refer to Exhibit C)

As a consumer, I have the right to know what is in the food I buy to feed my family. Properly labeled food products allow consumers to make informed food purchasing decisions. When it comes to GMOs, Connecticut consumers simply deserve the right to choose whether to buy them or not.

Exhibit A

Jeffery Smith

Institute of Responsible Technology

10 reasons why to stay away from GMOs

<http://www.responsibletechnology.org/>

"The American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) reported that "Several animal studies indicate serious health risks associated with GM food," including infertility, immune problems, accelerated aging, faulty insulin regulation, and changes in major organs and the gastrointestinal system. The AAEM asked physicians to advise patients to avoid GM foods".

Exhibit B

"According to the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM), animal studies show organ damage, gastrointestinal and immune system disorders, and infertility problems. AAEM also states that Genetic Engineering creates dangerous

side effects: “By mixing genes from totally unrelated species, genetic engineering unleashes a host of unpredictable side effects. Moreover, irrespective of the type of genes that are inserted, the very process of creating a GM plant can result in massive collateral damage that produces new toxins, allergens, carcinogens, and nutritional deficiencies”.

Exhibit C

According to Wikipedia, “the complex of enzymes produced in any mammalian stomach is called Rennet. Rennet is used to produce cheese. Because of the limited availability of mammalian availability of mammalian stomachs for rennet production, cheese makers have looked for other ways”.

“Fermentation-Produced Chymosin (FPC):

With the development of genetic engineering, it became possible to extract rennet-producing genes from animal stomach and insert them into certain bacteria, fungi or yeast to make them produce chymosin during fermentation. FCP was the first artificially produced enzyme to be registered and allowed by the FDA. According Wikipedia, Genetically Engineered Rennet has about 80% or the market share and as of 2008 approximately 80%-90% of commercially made cheeses in the US and Britain were made using Genetically Modified based rennet”.